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# Elegy for Metalworking

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KATHRYN MERWIN

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## ELEGY FOR METALWORKING

Dear Polish tongue, dear broken  
rib, dear machine-man in the darkening

foundry. Your stark frame against the western  
dayglow interrupts

the night: you freeze its reckless bleeding, seal it  
to yourself, to the rough seam

in you, unthreading. The cold sun halos

the stern fact of you, looking  
into me. Dear body

relic, dear welding torch, dear headwind  
buttoned into skin: an object in motion will remain in motion,

until another force compels it  
to stillness. I want to dissect

you: the flexion  
of your wrists, the full strum

of your anger, the stringing  
of your tendons. Your hands

move like magic  
over metal, shaping, flooding

chemical bonds, until it shapes itself  
to the lines of your palms.